

BOOK REVIEWS



***Heroes Never Die: Warriors and Warfare in World War II.* By Martin Blumenson. Cooper Square Press, 2001. 644 Pages. \$32.00, Hardcover.** Reviewed by Colonel Cole C. Kingseed, U.S. Army, Retired.

Few military historians have placed a greater personal impact on our study of World War II than Martin Blumenson. Blumenson is no stranger to the readers of *Infantry*. A former staff historian of Patton's Third Army, he is the distinguished editor of *The Patton Papers* and numerous books on the 20th century's greatest conflict. He remains the country's leading expert on George S. Patton and has been a frequent lecturer on combat leadership.

In *Heroes Never Die*, Blumenson adds to his legacy as one of this country's leading military historians. This latest work is a compendium of 50 essays never before assembled in a single volume. Each of the essays focuses on a particular aspect of World War II and attempts to revive and restore our images of it. What makes this book so provocative is the author's ability to challenge traditional interpretations of the war's various commanders and decisions. Though some observers may seek in vain to find current relevancy in the study of World War II, Blumenson accurately argues that one standard is ever important: Heroism is never out of date.

At the center of *Heroes Never Die* are the commanders of the U.S. Army who waged global war from 1941-1945. Eisenhower, MacArthur, Bradley, Patton, Ridgway, and a host of lesser known leaders are all present. Readers will enjoy Blumenson's analysis of the professional relationship between World War II's "Odd Couple," Omar Bradley and George Patton. They will also be enthralled by the essay "A Short List of Giants," in which Blumenson examines the contributions of America's adversaries and the American commanders in the Navy and Army Air Forces. Two German field marshals, Erwin Rommel and Gerd von Rundstedt, command Blumenson's respect. But only Rommel joins the ranks as a great captain, because von Rundstedt allowed his personal loyalty to Hitler to override his other soldierly obligations. Blumenson lists

Marshal Georgi K. Zhukov and Field Marshal William J. Slim as the outstanding warriors for the Soviet Union and Great Britain respectively. With respect to the Army's sister services, the author cites Admiral Chester Nimitz of the Navy, General Henry H. "Hap" Arnold of the Army Air Forces, and General Holland M. Smith of the Marine Corps as top officers who have not received their just due from historians.

Blumenson's favorite general is undoubtedly Patton, who continues to intrigue him. In examining Patton's career, Blumenson discusses his subject's relationship with the press, his student days at Fort Leavenworth and the War College, the end of the European war, and the tragic automobile accident that led to Patton's untimely demise in December 1945. Blumenson's Patton is a dedicated professional who spent a lifetime preparing for battlefield command. If there is a lesson for today's officers and noncommissioned officers in Blumenson's study of Patton, it is "to reach for the best that is in us, and a little beyond." Small wonder why Patton emerged from the war as Eisenhower's most indispensable operational commander.

In addition to examining the significance of numerous battles and campaigns, including Kasserine Pass, Monte Cassino, and the Falaise Gap, Blumenson makes another significant contribution in his assessment of generalship and the art of command. According to Blumenson, command requires the utmost professional skill and personal concentration, factors that make the exercise of successful command seem effortless.

Readers will also find Blumenson's essay entitled "Measuring Generalship" especially informative. In this chapter, he assesses numerous commanders from World War II to the present and concludes that even among the frictions of war, in the final analysis, devotion to duty is its own reward.

Heroes Never Die is destined to be a collector's item of superb prose and insightful analysis, set against the background of this nation's greatest conflict. As the dust jacket indicates, some readers may disagree with Blumenson's interpretations, but none will doubt his thoroughness or his ability to

evoke a response from his audience. In addition to providing sterling examples of heroism under fire, this book confirms Blumenson's status as the dean of American military historians.

***Anzio: The Gamble that Failed.* By Martin Blumenson. Cooper Square Press, 2001 (Second Edition). 212 Pages, Maps. \$17.95, Softbound.** Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Dominic J. Caraccilo.

Thirty-eight years after its initial publication in 1963, *Anzio: The Gamble That Failed* by esteemed historian Martin Blumenson, once again hits the presses. By the end of 1943, the Allied campaign in Italy had become a stalemate as German forces stopped the Allied advance cold at Cassino.

In a country where the fighting front was limited by the 80-mile width of the Italian peninsula—and in a region where rugged mountains impeded maneuver and favored the defense—prospects for a swift and decisive victory were slim. What seemed to be a methodical beach assault and a push north to relieve the Cassino line and eventually to seize Rome and beyond became a five-month casualty-generating struggle.

This timeless account of the VI U.S. Army Corps beach landing and lodgment expansion of *Anzio* is a classic rendition of the ill-fated Allied attempt to "conduct linkup" and push north in an effort to draw Axis forces away from the Eastern Front.

The divergent interests of Great Britain and the United States, and their continuing lack of consensus on the question of how to conduct the war in Europe prompted the decision to strike at Anzio. The controversial Major General John Lucas led the assault that resulted in a four-month battle that some consider one of the most ill-conceived operations of the war, and by others as one of the notorious lost opportunities of the Allied war effort.

Blumenson describes in detail the events of the battle as it unfolds and, more importantly, he gives a first-rate account of the personalities and attitudes of the players involved. Most notably is his in-depth analysis of the interaction between the British and Theater Commander, Sir Harold

Alexander, and the American leadership under the guise of Generals Mark Clark, John Lucas, and Lucian Truscott.

Blumenson rightly identifies the complex issues associated with the uncertainties and contributing factors that affected the outcome of the battle. He captures in remarkable form the essence behind the failed gamble as he meticulously analyzes the major figures involved. The Allied leaders in Italy at the time were "bedeviled by cross purposes and misunderstandings." Blumenson presents their characters here so clearly that what was at the time a most confusing situation emerges with embarrassing lucidity.

This is not just another chronological depiction of a failed World War II battle. It is a classic model of leadership and the angst that leaders experience when the decision-making is at its hardest. *Anzio: The Gamble that Failed* is full of lessons learned, from the strategic level down to the tactical. It should be required reading for military leaders at all levels.

***The Battle of Ap Bac, Vietnam. They Did Everything but Learn from It.* By David M. Toczek. Greenwood Press, 2001. 224 Pages. \$62.00.** Reviewed by Dr. Joe P. Dunn, Converse College.

The Battle of Ap Bac on January 2, 1963 was a minor engagement in the long war. The combatants were less than a regiment of ARVN soldiers with a few helicopters and armored personnel carriers against a battalion of Viet Cong guerrillas. The results of the isolated incident that lasted less than a day were ambiguous, interpretation subject to the spin doctors of both adversaries. However, this seemingly marginal event took on a larger consequence both at the time and in retrospect.

The Viet Cong proclaimed their dubious success as a great victory over the enemy. General Paul Harkins, the commanding officer of the Military Assistance Command—Vietnam, and Ambassador Frederick Nolting downplayed the performance of the ARVN in what they dismissed as an insignificant engagement. American military junior officers working directly with the ARVN believed that Ap Bac indicated the extensive American training effort was not producing adequate results.

The small American press corps covering Vietnam echoed the junior officer's concerns, and some commentators, even at this early stage, magnified the battle as a metaphor of the war. This perspective would grow as America sank deeper into the con-

flict of the years to come.

Toczek, an assistant professor of history at the United States Military Academy, dispassionately avoids the histrionics and exaggerations on both sides of the question as he calls Ap Bac "an interesting historical paradox," and says that "its greatest importance lies in its perceived unimportance by American policy makers." He continues that American senior leadership missed the warning signal of the failed military policy that Ap Bac indicated. He makes a very good case.

The author provides a very detailed account of all aspects of the battle, certainly the most comprehensive treatment of the conflict in print. Frankly, this rendering is a bit dry for most readers. The most interesting parts of the book are the two introductory chapters, "The Background" and "The Belligerents," which trace the development of the ARVN, the American advisory effort in the 1950s and early 1960s, and the military strategies of both the U.S./ARVN and the Viet Cong. Ronald Spector's *Advice and Support: The Early Years of the U.S. Army in Vietnam, 1941-1960*; James Collins's *The Development and Training of the South Vietnamese Army*; and other sources cover this period in exhaustive detail, but Toczek offers a very handy, brief capsule for the general reader.

Although this sound and judicious study is not groundbreaking or particularly exciting, it is a worthy contribution to the literature on the war.

***British Campaign Furniture: Elegance under Canvas, 1740-1914.* By Nicholas A. Brawer. Harry N. Abrams Inc., 2001. 232 Pages. \$45.00.** Reviewed by Kerry Bowling, Fort Benning, Georgia.

Writing on a subject previously neglected in the study of military artifacts, Nicholas A. Brawer explores the "life under canvas" that made British gentlemen-officers "go to great expense to maintain their prestige, rank, and station in life, as well as the comforts of their permanent homes, while on military service abroad." Through a collection of 275 photographs depicting the collapsible furniture in both assembled and disassembled stages, Brawer meticulously describes the evolution of campaign furniture during the Georgian, Victorian, and Edwardian eras of Great Britain.

Beginning with the first section, British Campaign Furniture, the book goes beyond the fold-up furnishings, delving into the social status and imperial influence that the British brought with them on the march.

Scattered throughout the text are extensive footnotes that significantly contribute to the reader's understanding and several quotes, mainly from Army and Navy officers who reflect on the necessity of the campaign furniture, or the absurdity of carrying such luxury in times of war. As the unknown author of *The Navy "At Home"* noted, *In short, all was of the most refined elegance, of the most approved taste, of the most exquisite delicacy, and of the richest description, side by side, with the instruments of stern and instant destruction...not Cleopatra herself, in her gilded and silken galley, knew an equal luxury.* In fact, the more portable the furniture became, the more the officers ordered, so as to make living abroad the exact life they lived in London.

An especially opulent period was during the British Raj in India where it took "60 horses, 140 elephants, two or three hundred baggage camels and bullock carts without end" to transport the Governor-General and his two sisters "up the country" from Calcutta. For as Brawer puts it rather eloquently, "the Empire was indeed portable, so long as it was borne on the backs and heads of men."

The second section, *Elegance Abroad: A Portfolio*, consists of 35 pages of photographs in both color and black and white, encompassing all varieties of campaign furniture along with footnotes containing manufacturer information and the purpose of each particular piece. Among the many examples are a portable billiard table and folding chess board for the "gentleman at ease," and a portable shower as a part of one's personal kit.

As the 19th century drew to a close and more companies began to produce campaign furniture, the style changed dramatically from the large, lavish pieces designed by Chippendale and Sheraton and became more utilitarian and compact in style. The violent and deadly Boer War (1899-1902) proved that mobility had to take precedence over luxury, giving rise to the era of modern day campaign furniture. This time period also saw the population of England double, which led to the incorporation of collapsible furniture in domestic homes as an alternative to cramped urban dwelling. Campaign furniture was no longer exclusive to the military.

Included at the end of the text is a Directory of British Campaign Furniture Makers, Outfitters, and Patentees, for those interested in the more collectable aspect of this furniture, as this book is geared towards the collector. Though the book's historical social context is both well researched and fascinat-

ing in its presentation, today's professional military officer might have difficulty relating to the lavishness, due to today's emphasis on lightness of load and deployability.

The extensive collection of photographs and amusing stories make this book an interesting read, though at times the text is bogged down with information relevant only to those seeking to study this particular topic. The military reader will find only a scant amount of military historical value in *British Campaign Furniture*. It is reasonably priced, however, and offers intriguing insight into a previously unresearched aspect of past British warfare.

100 Decisive Battles: From Ancient Times to the Present: The World's Major Battles and How They Shaped History. By Paul K. Davis. Oxford University Press, 1999. 462 Pages, Maps. \$18.95, Softbound. Reviewed by Colonel Christopher B. Timmers, U.S. Army, Retired.

You've got to hand it to a guy who starts with Megiddo in 1479 B.C. and ends up with Desert Storm in 1991 A.D., and identifies 98 historic, decisive battles in between. Now historians, military men, and armchair generals will always argue as to which battles in history were truly "decisive" and with the exception of perhaps a dozen—among them Zama, Waterloo, Gettysburg, Verdun, and Normandy—there will always be disagreement as to which other famous contests should be included in any list deemed decisive.

Professor Davis anticipates objections to his inclusions (and exclusions) with very convincing criteria. Specifically, a battle, to be considered decisive, must meet three conditions: 1) The outcome of the battle brought about a major political or social change (Hastings, 1066); 2) Had the outcome of the battle been reversed, major social or political changes would have ensued (Trenton, 1776); and 3) The battle must mark a major change in warfare (Adrianople 378, where Goths defeated Roman infantry largely through the use of cavalry).

It is difficult to argue with these standards. Further, Davis does not restrict himself to battles fought in Europe and North America (Seikgahara 1600, and Hsiang-Yang 1268-73, are discussed at length), nor does he neglect to mention famous sea battles (the Spanish Armada, 1588, and Midway, 1942, make the list as does Tsushima Straits, 1905). American readers may wonder what happened to the Little Big Horn (1876); Brits may be put off because Rorke's Drift (1879) is nowhere mentioned.

But recall Professor Davis's criteria and you will understand why. Political or social change did not come about as a result of these engagements, nor were any new tactics or weapons employed.

This book is truly enjoyable. The narrative is clean and focused. We do not read unnecessary and distracting data—for example, that Cervantes, the Spanish poet and author, lost his left hand at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Historical context is always given and, most of the time, there are maps to help the reader follow the battle. There are a few typos that someone should have caught, however. The most egregious is in the discussion of the Tet Offensive in 1968: Lyndon Johnson's bombing campaign against North Vietnam, known as Rolling Thunder, was commenced in February of 1965, not 1985. But these are minor gaffes and, thankfully, do not detract from the scholarship or readability of the work.

The Sicily Campaign: Recollections of an Infantry Company Commander, July-August 1943. By Major General (Retired) Albert H. Smith, Jr., USA. Society of the First Infantry Division, 2001. 291 Pages. \$21.50, Softbound. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Albert N. Garland, U.S. Army, Retired.

The author, who served with the 16th Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division throughout World War II, has had a long-standing and personal interest in the Sicily campaign, Operation *Husky*, an oft-forgotten Allied military operation of the war.

This is understandable, considering that he commanded a rifle company (Company L, 3d Battalion) of the 16th Infantry in Sicily and gave us his earlier recollections in a two-part article published in 1993 in *Infantry Magazine*. (Both parts are reproduced in this book.)

He has done a fine job in taking material from a variety of sources and presenting it in a well-thought-out and well-designed final product that recalls for all of his readers, and particularly for past and present members of the 1st Division, the outstanding role that division played in the campaign from its initial landings in early July 1943 to the end in mid-August of the same year.

As co-author of the official U.S. Army history of the Sicily campaign and the surrender of Italy—parts of which are also reproduced here—I can vouch for the author's knowledge of the campaign. He has also taken material from various 1st Division sources that bear directly on *Husky*.

He has seasoned all of this with several excellent photo essays, and wraps up his efforts with an afterword and four appendices. In the afterword, Martin Blumenson, an outstanding military historian, details his reasons for believing *Husky* was so meaningful (p. 208).

General Smith has prepared, essentially, two books in one—the first, a discussion of the campaign itself, and the second, a history of the 1st Division's participation in the operation. Perhaps the second part is the most important, for as the publisher puts it, the "book honors our beloved Division's achievements in a tough combat campaign over awesome terrain."

Providence Their Guide: The Long Range Desert Group, 1940-45. By David Lloyd Owen. Originally published in 1980. Reprint, Leo Cooper, 2000. 238 Pages. \$30.00. Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel Harold E. Raugh, Jr., U.S. Army, Retired.

The Long Range Desert Group (LRDG) was one of the first and most effective special forces units formed during World War II. The members were specialists in deep, strategic reconnaissance, as contrasted with the Special Air Service, or SAS, which conducted raids and other combat patrols. This well-written and interesting book succeeds admirably in recounting the LRDG's contributions to victory.

Italy declared war on Great Britain on 10 June 1940. Less than two weeks later, the British, whose troops were facing the Italians at the Libyan-Egyptian border in North Africa, authorized the formation of the LRDG (originally called the Long Range Patrols) under the command of eminent desert explorer Major Ralph Bagnold. The unit, initially composed of soldiers from Great Britain, New Zealand, and Rhodesia, was trained by Bagnold to peak proficiency. The numerous and difficult challenges facing the LRDG—in addition to possible enemy detection and capture—were daunting.

Each patrol (generally two officers, 30 soldiers, and 11 vehicles) had to be self-sufficient and mobile. Each vehicle had to be able to carry, in addition to its crew, food, water, ammunition, and fuel for three weeks—the latter alone amounting to 350 gallons. Moreover, each vehicle had to be capable, during each patrol, of traveling some 2,000 miles over unmapped, inhospitable terrain, and scorching, shifting sands. After intensive training and vehicle modifications, the LRDG was prepared by the end of August 1940 to begin patrolling behind

enemy lines.

Author David Lloyd Owen joined the LRDG in 1941 and, as a 26-year-old officer, assumed command of the group in late 1943 (and subsequently retired as a decorated major general). He was a dynamic and innovative leader, and his unique knowledge and perspective of events, as a patrol leader on many missions in North Africa and as Group commander in Italy, the Aegean, and the Balkans, add credibility and insight to his narrative. Owen's descriptions of the colorful personalities of the LRDG and their operations (albeit frequently with unreferenced conversations) are vivid and shrewd. This is an enthralling saga of indefatigable men and modified machines on difficult wartime missions.

This book, republished from the original 1980 edition, contains the same meaningful Foreword by General Sir John Hackett, as well as a new Introduction by Sir John Keegan. A worthwhile visual dimension is provided by almost three dozen photographs and three superb maps. An excellent "Chronological Table of Events," short "Select Bibliography," and index augment and add value to the narrative.

Providence Their Guide is part memoir, part unit history, and a total record of professionalism, proficiency, courage, and sacrifice. This fast-paced action-filled book is also a primer on unorthodox small unit leadership and tactical operations as conducted by Great Britain's Long Range Desert Group during World War II. A superb tribute to the officers and men of the LRDG, this excellent book merits a wide readership by contemporary soldiers and military historians.

***Inside Delta Force: The Story of America's Elite Counterterrorist Unit.* By Eric L. Haney. Delacorte Press, 2002. 325 Pages, photographs. \$25.95, Hardcover.** Reviewed by Michael F. Dilley.

"Speed, surprise, and violence of action. Those were the keys to success and survival, those and the ability to shoot what we intended to shoot and nothing else. We were not just going in harm's way, we were going to charge down harm's throat, grab a handful of his guts, and turn him inside out."

This graphic paragraph, tucked into a description of the Operators Training Course (OTC), gets to the heart of the mission of 1st Special Forces Detachment-Delta, popularly referred to as Delta Force. Eric Haney was an early member of Delta, completing selection in 1978 and enrolled in the third iteration of the OTC. Haney's book, *Inside*

Delta Force, describes his and Delta's journey through about 1986. It describes the selection process, training, and early missions. Haney tells his story in a straightforward narrative, managing to give the reader the broad outlines and some details without exposing any sensitive sources or methods.

As many are aware, Delta was the U.S. Army's response to the growing tide of terrorist activity (bombings, hijackings, kidnappings, and murders) of the early and mid-1970's. Formed at Fort Bragg under the command of Colonel Charlie Beckwith, Delta does not officially exist. Now it would be difficult to assert that its existence is classified, but it is not acknowledged officially. Haney, however, shows us that Delta does indeed exist and is very good at what it does. At least half of the book covers the selection process and the OTC as they were when Haney went through them.

Trite as it sounds, it is still true that not much is available concerning Delta in open-source material. This is only the fourth book of which I am aware that deals with Delta, and one of the other three deals with operations of former members of Delta who rescue kidnapped children. *Inside Delta Force* is the only one that tells the story from the perspective of the operator. That makes the book interesting, but readers will discover that Haney's writing style will grab their interest and hold it.

Students of special operations will be pleased that Haney discusses what else Delta did, at least while he was in the unit, besides rescue operations. This includes training foreign counterterrorist units (although this training is apparently no longer conducted); executive protection advice, training, and missions for U.S. ambassadors abroad (in support of State Department requests for assistance); on-the-spot advice to foreign rescue efforts; and a variety of other missions. In the section covering the OTC, Haney goes to great lengths to show that many other Government agencies provided training to new Delta operators. This training was both comprehensive in presentation and broad in scope. All of the missions and training are mixed in with constant weapons training, both individual and in teams. Haney stresses throughout that Delta's operators are not the cowboys that many people think they are. They are dedicated, thoughtful professionals who have one of the toughest jobs in the U.S. Army.

The best part of this book is Haney's description of the final exercise of the OTC. The most surprising thing in the book deals with a mission that was scrubbed twice between 1981 and 1983—to go into Laos to

rescue Americans still being held in prison camps sponsored by the North Vietnamese. This is a subject about which more should be known, but it will probably remain classified and compartmented long after most of us are gone. Perhaps the most vivid scene in the book describes what Haney saw, heard, and felt when he sat for the first time as a hostage in the Shooting House and was "rescued."

I highly recommend *Inside Delta Force* to military history students, especially those who concentrate on special mission units, to soldiers across the board within the U.S. Army, and even to the civilian public. This book is well written, difficult to put down, and should inspire further research by any reader.

RECENT AND RECOMMENDED

***Patriot Hearts: An Anthology of American Patriotism.* By William T. Coffey, Jr. Purple Mountain Publishing (P.O. Box 77019, Colorado Springs, CO 80970-7019), 2002. 444 Pages. \$16.95, Softbound.**

***Command Legacy: A Tactical Primer for Junior Leaders of Infantry Units.* By Lt. Col. Raymond A. Millen. Brassey's, 2002. 408 Pages. \$24.95.**

***The 1863 U.S. Infantry Tactics: Infantry of the Line, Light Infantry, and Riflemen.* 2nd Edition. U.S. War Department, 1863. Stackpole, 2002. 592 Pages, Drawings, (3½ x 5). \$21.95, Hardcover.**

***The 1865 Customs of Service for Officers of the Army: A Handbook of the Duties of Each Grade Lieutenant to Lieut.-General.* By August V. Kautz. Stackpole, 2002. 398 Pages (3½ x 5). \$15.95, Hardcover.**

***Fire Mission: American Cannoneers Defeating the German Army in World War II.* By Donald T. Peck. Sunflower University Press, 2001. 230 Pages. \$15.95, Softbound.**

***Fatal Voyage: The Sinking of the USS Indianapolis.* By Dan Kurzman. Originally published in 1990. Broadway Books, 2001. 415 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.**

***Throwing Fire: A History of Projectile Technology.* By Alfred W. Crosby. Cambridge University Press, 2002. 220 Pages. \$26.00.**

***West Point: A Bicentennial History.* By Theodore J. Crackel. University Press of Kansas, 2002. 384 Pages. \$34.95.**

***Tent Pegs and 2nd Lieutenants: Memoirs and Stories of the Korean War.* By John W. Harper. Conversation Press, 2002. 128 Pages. \$13.95, Softbound.**

***America's Commandos: U.S. Special Operations Forces of World War II and Korea.* By Leroy Thompson. Stackpole, 2001. 72 Pages. \$14.95, Softbound.**

***The Greenhill Dictionary of Guns and Gun-Makers: From Colt's First Patent to the Present Day, 1836-2001.* By John Walter. 576 Pages. \$59.95, Hardcover.**

***Counter-terrorism Equipment.* Revised Edition. By Ian V. Hogg. First published 1997. Stackpole, 2001. 144 Pages. \$24.00, Hardcover.**